

June 26, 2009

I rise today in support of H.R. 2996, the Fiscal Year 2010 Interior Appropriations Act. This bill provides the much needed funding to protect and preserve our natural resources for future generations.

I applaud the Chairman for providing robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in this legislation. I have long been a supporter and a leader in Congress for increasing the funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since its creation in 1965, LWCF has provided funding to four federal agencies including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service to acquire public lands.

In July of 1999 during my first term in Congress, I secured passage of a key amendment to resurrect the state-side portion of LWCF, providing funding for that program for the first time in five years. To date, the stateside program has preserved over 73,000 acres of land in my home state of New Jersey. I strongly support the Manager's amendment which would increase the funding for the state-side matching grants to \$40 million, which is over double the amount that it received in Fiscal Year 2009.

I strongly oppose the amendment of the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Chaffetz, that would strip funding from the state side portion of the LWCF. This amendment would be detrimental to the ability of states to preserve at risk open space and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.